

The University of Chicago

THE FUR TRADE IN NEW FRANCE
AND NEW NETHERLAND

PRIOR TO 1645

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

1936

By

JEAN ELIZABETH MURRAY

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THE EARLY FUR TRADE IN NEW FRANCE AND NEW NETHERLAND

THE histories of New France and New Netherland prior to 1645 are similar in broad outline and when one examines the fur trade, the chief economic interest in both colonies, the resemblances which emerge are on the whole more striking than the points of difference. Nevertheless the developments on the St. Lawrence were by no means identical with those on the Hudson and a comparison will throw light on the distinctive characteristics of each colony.

It was fish and not fur which first attracted the French and Dutch to America. The French were on the Grand Banks in 1504¹ and within a century they built up an industry there and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence which employed about a thousand vessels annually.² The Dutch, on the other hand, do not seem to have appeared at Newfoundland until the 1580's and '90's³ and although they continued to frequent the east coast in the seventeenth century they did not develop extensive fisheries. They were already supreme in the North sea herring fishery⁴ and were not easily diverted to more distant and less remunerative fisheries in America. Their interest in Newfoundland was chiefly in the sack trade. Instead of going to Plymouth and other west country ports to buy cod after the return of the banks fleet, the Dutch took

¹All French manuscript sources cited in this article were consulted in transcript at the Public Archives in Ottawa. References are given to the page number of the transcript wherever possible.

Works of Samuel de Champlain ed. H. P. Biggar (Champlain Society, Toronto, 1922-36), III, 260; *Jesuit relations and allied documents* ed. R. G. Thwaites (Cleveland, 1894-1901), III, 39-41, IV, 105; Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, *Fonds français 8036*, "Histoire abrégée des compagnies de commerce", 6; *ibid.* 13424, "Découverte de l'Amerique", 3-4; *Collection of documents relating to Jacques Cartier and the Sieur de Roberval* (Publications of the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, 1924), xix. Cf. R. Hakluyt, *The principal navigations, voyages, traffiques and discoveries of the English nation* (Glasgow, 1903-5), VIII, 438; R. Barlow, *A brief summe of geographia* (Hakluyt Society, London, 1932), 179; W. F. Ganong, "Crucial maps in the early cartography and place-nomenclature of the Atlantic coast of Canada, I" (*Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, ser. 3, XXIII, 1929, sect. 2, 167-70).

²About 600 Breton and Norman vessels were engaged in the cod fisheries alone. See A. de Montchrétien, *Traicté de l'oeconomie politique dédié en 1615 au roy et à la reyne mère du roy* ed. Th. Funck-Brentano (Paris, 1889), 231; Champlain, *Works*, II, 327, 335.

³*Fonds français 15452*, A. Thevet, "Le grand insulaire", 10; *Proceedings and debates of the British parliaments respecting North America* ed. L. F. Stock (Carnegie Institution, Washington, 1924), I, 7.

⁴According to van Meteren they were sending 1,500 vessels to the North sea fishery in 1610. See *History of the state of New York* ed. A. C. Flick, I (New York, 1933), 182.

their galiots directly to Newfoundland.⁵ Apparently they found that they could engage more profitably in sack fishing than in green fishing on the banks.

In connection with the dry fishery which they established in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the French carried on barter for furs. In the 1580's certain Malouin merchants despatched vessels for trade alone⁶ and they made such a fabulous profit that rivals flocked into the field. Excessive competition, however, proved to be only one of the risks of a trading voyage. Returns from fur were so variable during the next three decades that even the privileged companies combined fishing with the fur trade in order to lessen the heavy expenses of the long voyage.⁷ Thus the earliest French trade was subsidiary to, and dependent on, the fisheries until Champlain and his associates opened up a steady and substantial trade with Indians living up the Ottawa river. French coastal trade always retained that close connection with the fisheries which was characteristic of this early period but it never became comparable in value or volume⁸ with the trade established with inland tribes.

The fur trade in New Netherland originated and developed independently of the fisheries. There were no profitable fishing grounds off shore and apparently the merchants who sent ships to the Hudson between 1610 and 1622 were interested solely in the fur trade.⁹ Interloping in Acadia and the Gulf of St. Lawrence was another matter, however. Dutch pirates active off the coast of Newfoundland and New Netherlanders returning to the mother country took whatever they could get of fish and oil as well as fur.¹⁰

⁵D. W. Prowse, *A history of Newfoundland* (London, 1896), 58, 127, 153, 163; *Documents relative to the colonial history of the state of New York* ed. E. B. O'Callaghan (Albany, 1853), I, 15 (hereafter cited as NYCD); C. B. Judah, *The North American fisheries and British policy to 1713* (Illinois studies in the social sciences, Urbana, 1933), 87 ff.

⁶Hakluyt, *Principal navigations*, VIII, 146, 272-4; *Calendar of state papers, colonial series, addenda 1574-1674*, 20; R. Hakluyt, "A discourse concerning western planting" ed. C. Deane (*Maine Historical Society collections*, ser. 2, *Documentary history*, II, 34-5, 101-2).

⁷*Documents relatifs à la marine normande et à ses armements aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles* éd. C. et P. Bréard (La Société de l'Histoire de Normandie, Rouen, 1889), 69-70, 84-92; M. Lescarbot, *The history of New France* trans. and ed. W. L. Grant (Champlain Society, Toronto, 1907-14), II, 350; Champlain, *Works*, V, 101; A. Gosselin, "Les Normands au Canada" (*Précis analytique des travaux de l'Académie des sciences, belles-lettres et arts de Rouen pendant l'année 1871-72*, 325-6, 331-6).

⁸See Champlain's explanation, *Works*, IV, 28-9.

⁹NYCD, I, 11, III, 7; *Narratives of New Netherland, 1609-1664* ed. J. F. Jameson (Original narratives of early American history, New York, 1909), 7, 22, 25, 26, 38, 78, 81.

¹⁰Lescarbot, *History of New France*, II, 350-1; Montchrétien, *Traicté de l'oeconomie politique*, 229; *Recueil des lettres missives de Henri IV* éd. J. Berger de Xivrey (Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France, série I, Histoire politique, Paris, 1843-76), VII, 465-6; "A Spanish account of New France" trans. M. A. Buchanan and J. E.

The French complained to Louis XIII in 1641 that the Dutch were making serious inroads into the Acadian trade,¹¹ but nothing came of their protest.¹²

Both the French and Dutch were located on rivers favourable to the development of a large inland trade. The French were nearer the territories from which a seemingly inexhaustible supply of the best beaver was obtainable but this advantage was offset by the difficulties which they experienced in navigating the St. Lawrence. Until the 1630's they left their sea-going vessels at Tadoussac and proceeded beyond that port in pinnaces.¹³ After they had become familiar with the channel, they took ships of one to two hundred tons up the river but only as far as Quebec.¹⁴ Between Quebec and the Ottawa they were able to use pinnaces and shallops but in order to travel on the tributaries of the St. Lawrence they required canoes and the assistance of friendly Indians. By canoe, however, the French could go swiftly and easily from the St. Lawrence to any part of the interior.

The Hudson river furnished a short, practicable route to the upper St. Lawrence and great lakes but the Dutch were slow to realize this fact. Early traders frequently sailed to the mouth of the Mohawk. The West India Company, however, refused to allow its ships to go above Manhattan where freight and passengers were transferred to yachts for conveyance to other points.¹⁵ In river and coastwise trade they used sloops and yachts.¹⁶ The clumsy dugout characteristic of the tribes of the lower Hudson held no attraction for Europeans, of course, but if they had so desired the Dutch could have secured elm-bark canoes from the Iroquois and birch-bark canoes from northern tribes. They did not adopt the canoe for ordinary travel, however. After Kleyn-ties's capture by the Conestoga in 1614,¹⁷ the Dutch did not

Shaw (CANADIAN HISTORICAL REVIEW, I, 1920, 288); Prowse, *History of Newfoundland*, 103; *Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS* trans. and ed. A. J. F. van Laer (Albany, N.Y., 1908), 407, 421.

¹¹Ministère des affaires étrangères, Paris, *Mémoires et documents*, IV, 182.

¹²Two Dutch ships were caught trading there in 1642 and 1644 respectively. See transcript in Public Archives of Canada of *Amirauté de La Rochelle*, Liasse 77, dossiers 2, 6.

¹³Champlain, *Works*, II, 25, 333; G. Sagard-Théodat, *Le grand voyage du pays des Hurons* (Paris, 1865), 31. The first occasion on which ships were taken up the river seems to have been in 1629 when the Kirkes secured the services of captive French pilots and sailed right to Quebec.

¹⁴*Jesuit relations*, VIII, 47, IX, 161, XXVI, 137-9.

¹⁵*Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 569-70, 613; *Narratives of New Netherland*, 54.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 7, 50, 54, 86, 87; *Documents relating to New Netherland, 1624-1626* ed. A. J. F. van Laer (Huntington Library and Art Gallery Publications, San Marino, Cal., 1924), 192, 200, 224.

¹⁷*NYCD*, I, 14; also inscription on map facing p. 11. It was to this incident that Champlain referred in *Works*, III, 54-5.

wander far from the Hudson until 1634-5 when traders went west to the Oneida villages¹⁸ and north to the St. Lawrence.¹⁹ Like the Indians they found it easier to go to the Iroquois country by land than by water but probably they used canoes in order to reach the St. Lawrence.²⁰ Inland travel was discouraged by Indian hostility in the 1640's, particularly in the war zone north of Fort Orange, and so the Dutch had no special reason to use canoes in that decade.

Both the French and Dutch depended on the Indians to collect and carry furs to the posts or rendezvous for trade. The French made their earliest contacts with migratory Algonkian tribes which lived by hunting and fishing. They were fortunate, too, in their friendship with the Hurons, a sedentary tribe of Iroquoian stock which practised agriculture and also travelled far afield to barter maize for hides and fur.²¹ The French thus were able to build their trade on the existing foundation of intertribal barter and to benefit from a wider and more rapid distribution of their goods than otherwise would have been possible. As early as the 1620's, however, they found that Indian middlemen could be troublesome and a hindrance to the extension of trade. Native monopolists were jealous of their customary rights and persistently tried to exclude the French from profitable territories.²²

Most of the Indians in New Netherland belonged to semi-agricultural tribes of Algonkian stock. Being relatively self-sufficient they were not much given to intertribal barter and, with the exception of the Mahican who lived in the upper Hudson valley, they were of little use to the Dutch as middlemen. They had access, however, to an abundant supply of wampum which attracted visits from the Adirondacks, Montagnais, and others from north of the St. Lawrence.²³ By capitalizing this demand for wampum the Dutch could have vastly increased the volume

¹⁸*Narratives of New Netherland*, 139-57.

¹⁹A. van der Donck, "A description of the New Netherlands" trans. J. Johnson (*New York Historical Society collections*, ser. 2, I, 214. See also *Jesuit relations*, XV, 31.

²⁰Van der Donck, however, did not believe that it was possible "to proceed in boats to the river of Canada". See "A description of the New Netherlands", 143.

²¹Sagard, *Grand voyage*, 90, 243. Huronia was a resort for traders of non-agricultural tribes. See *ibid.*, 53; *Jesuit relations*, VIII, 115.

²²Champlain, *Works*, II, 19, 286-8, III, 100; Sagard, *Grand voyage*, 51, 75, 257, 260; G. Sagard-Théodat, *Histoire du Canada et voyages que les frères mineurs Recollects y ont faits pour la conversion des infidèles depuis l'an 1615* (Paris, 1866), III, 801-5; *Jesuit relations*, VI, 19, VIII, 41, IX, 247, X, 77, 223-5, XII, 247, XV, 151, XX, 19.

²³*Narratives of New Netherland*, 47, 86; *Documents relating to New Netherland, 1624-1626*, 224; Champlain, *Works*, V, 214. See also Catelyn Trico's evidence in *Documentary history of the state of New York* ed. E. B. O'Callaghan (Albany, 1849-51), III, 51. Southerners occasionally made return visits to the north. See Champlain, *Works*, IV, 141.

of their trade, as de Rasière, the company's chief commercial agent in New Netherland, seems to have realized.²⁴ The Mahican were on friendly terms with their northern neighbours and probably would have welcomed regular visits from potential allies. The Mahican, however, were defeated in battle by the Mohawk in 1626 and during the next three years they were driven to the Connecticut river.²⁵ Thereafter the Mohawk dominated the Hudson valley and naturally they did not permit any of their enemies to share in the benefits of direct trade with the Dutch.²⁶

Of Iroquoian tribes the Dutch encountered the Mohawk within the first five years of trade and some of the upper Iroquois whom they called the Seneca.²⁷ They also had dealings with the Conestoga who lived on the Susquehanna river and were occasionally the allies of the Hurons against the Iroquois.²⁸ Until 1626 the Iroquois were denied free access to Dutch posts by the Mahican but after that date the Mohawk became aggressive in the fur trade. The Mohawk, in turn, demanded toll from the upper Iroquois who journeyed through their country to trade at Fort Orange and the upper Iroquois barred the way to their neighbours, the Conestoga. It was therefore difficult for the Dutch to work up trade with the upper tribes of the Iroquois confederacy and to establish continuous contact with the Conestoga through whom they might have reached the Hurons.

Proximity of the French and Dutch seemed likely to induce competition and conflict but there was no interference of one nation with the activities of the other prior to the 1630's. Indeed, factors which later intensified the struggle for control of the interior during this early period tended to separate rather than to draw the French and Dutch into collision. The French looked to the north and west for furs²⁹ and a route to the orient. The Dutch were preoccupied with their river and coastwise trade and did not engage in the search for a north-west passage by land. Thus neither trade nor exploration gave incentive to the encroachment of one nation on the territory claimed or desired by the other. Moreover, recurrent warfare between the Iroquois and northern Indians frequently broke off communication between the lands

²⁴*Documents relating to New Netherland, 1624-1626*, 212-5.

²⁵*Narratives of New Netherland*, 84, 89; *Jesuit relations*, XXVIII, 113-5; *Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 306.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 248, 553.

²⁷*Narratives of New Netherland*, 47, 53, 139. See map in *NYCD*, I, 13.

²⁸Champlain, *Works*, III, 53-4, VI, 250.

²⁹*Ibid.*, IV, 300-1.

north and south of the St. Lawrence and consequently checked any tendency of French and Dutch activities to overlap.

If Champlain had brought about a general pacification among tribes, he would have destroyed the chief protection which the French possessed against Dutch aggression in the 1630's and '40's. It was evident to Champlain that success and security in trade depended on the maintenance of amicable relations with the Montagnais who controlled the mouth of the St. Lawrence. It seemed, too, that penetration to the north and west could be easily effected by promising military assistance to tribes willing to facilitate French trade and exploration. On this basis Champlain struck a bargain with the Montagnais, Algonkin, and Hurons in turn.³⁰ Yet within a decade of his first participation in battle against the Iroquois, he realized that war and the rumour of war seriously impeded trade with the upper country.³¹ In 1622 he directed his efforts towards obtaining peace and was instrumental in bringing negotiations to a successful conclusion in 1624.³² His policy, however, did not meet with the approval of other traders who feared that a cessation of hostilities between the Iroquois and the Hurons would result in the diversion of Huron trade to the Dutch.³³ Champlain may have hoped that French influence was strong enough to avert that misfortune but his chief concern was to prevent a greater disaster—the closing to trade of the St. Lawrence itself.

Of Dutch designs on northern trade there can be no doubt. Van Krieckenbeeck, the *commis* at Fort Orange, joined the Mahican against the Mohawk in 1626³⁴ probably in the hope of clearing the way to regular trade with northern Indians. De Rasière disapproved of this "reckless adventure" yet himself wanted to drive off the Mohawk unless they would give "French Indians" a free passage through their country for trade with the Dutch.³⁵ De Rasière's threat was never carried out because the official policy of the West India Company was one of strict neutrality in so far as native quarrels and wars were concerned.³⁶ In 1635 the Dutch again were suspected of trying to break up the northern alliance

³⁰*Ibid.*, II, 69, 104-5, 110, 118-9, 254, 265, 276, 283-5, III, 226-8, IV, 183-4, 227-8.

³¹*Ibid.*, III, 31, 103. See also *ibid.*, V, 216.

³²This peace was short-lived. See *ibid.*, V, 73 ff.

³³Sagard, *Histoire*, III, 811.

³⁴The *commis* and three of his Dutch companions were killed in the battle. See *Narratives of New Netherland*, 84; *Jesuit relations*, XXVIII, 113-5. Van Rensselaer declared that van Krieckenbeeck incited the Mahican to take the field against the Mohawk. See *Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 306.

³⁵*Documents relating to New Netherland, 1624-1626*, 212-5.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 52-5, 109.

in order to draw the Hurons down to the Hudson.³⁷ As a matter of fact, the Dutch ardently desired this end but were unable to achieve it in the face of Mohawk opposition. In 1633 van Rensselaer complained that the Mohawk were obstinately blocking Dutch trade with French Indians.³⁸ In the following year van den Bogaert visited the Mohawk and Oneida in order to investigate reports that the French were undercutting Dutch prices. The Mohawk had made a truce with French Indians because they wanted as much for their furs as the northerners received.³⁹ In 1641 van Rensselaer was still hoping to divert to his warehouse some of the beaver going to Quebec,⁴⁰ so apparently the Mohawk had remained firm in their resistance to Dutch ambitions in the north.

The administrative history of trade in New France is similar to that of New Netherland in all essential points. The French and Dutch experimented with both free trade and monopoly. Under free trade the French suffered to a greater extent from excessive competition than the Dutch, but this was to be expected. Comparatively few merchants were attracted to the Hudson because the herring fishery and the Baltic and East India trades provided better fields for investment than the fur trade of New Netherland. French fisheries in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, on the other hand, furnished the opportunity as well as the capital and experience necessary to successful participation in the Canadian fur trade. Even the monopolists found it impossible to prevent interloping and smuggling, although it must be admitted that they did not spend money on the armaments necessary to enforce their privileges.⁴¹ In New Netherland there was time for only one grant of monopoly prior to the formation of the West India Company, and since the Amsterdam and north Holland merchants who had been sending ships to the Hudson between 1609 and 1615 were included in its membership, the United or New Netherland Company⁴² enjoyed relative freedom from interloping.

The two great privileged companies which secured rights of trade and government in New France and New Netherland appeared within the same decade. The Dutch West India Com-

³⁷*Jesuit relations*, VIII, 59-61.

³⁸*Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 248.

³⁹*Narratives of New Netherland*, 139.

⁴⁰*Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 553.

⁴¹Champlain, *Works*, V, 176-7.

⁴²*NYCD*, I, 10-2. It secured the exclusive right to make four voyages within three years from January 1, 1615.

pany obtained its monopoly in 1621,⁴³ the Company of New France in 1627.⁴⁴ The French company was organized under the distinguished patronage of Cardinal Richelieu but it was not subsidized by the state or granted special protection as was the case with the Dutch company. The Company of New France was interested primarily in the development of the Canadian fur trade. It was hampered by excessively heavy obligations in the matter of colonization and was dealt a staggering blow by the capture of its fleet by the Kirkes in 1628⁴⁵ and the conquest of Quebec in the following year. The Dutch West India Company, on the other hand, was a "warlike company" whose real purpose was the destruction of Spanish power and the spoliation of Spanish possessions in the new world.⁴⁶ It was given a monopoly of trade with the coasts of Africa from the Tropic of Cancer to the Cape of Good Hope and with the entire coast of the Americas from Newfoundland to the Straits of Magellan and Le Maire and north to Bering sea. In comparison with the dazzling results of privateering and of trade in African ivory, gold, and slaves, the fur trade of New Netherland was "trifling" indeed,⁴⁷ and consequently the colony was of only minor importance in the company's scheme of things. Moreover, the West India Company was not expected to colonize the vast territories entrusted to its charge and allowed patroons to assume this burden in New Netherland.⁴⁸

Neither company enjoyed financial success. The Company of New France started out with a capital fund of 300,000 livres. Its expenditures up to 1645 amounted to 905,084 livres for which it received only 152,301 livres in return.⁴⁹ In 1632 it allowed a subsidiary company to manage the trade for five years on condition that it furnish 10,000 livres to defray the ordinary charges of the colony and allow the general company an interest of one-third. Under this arrangement the Company of New France received

⁴³Final organization was not completed for two years. See *Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 86 ff.

⁴⁴*Edits, ordonnances royaux, déclarations et arrêts du conseil d'état du roi concernant le Canada* (Québec, 1854), I, 5 ff.

⁴⁵Seven vessels had been equipped at a cost of over 164,720 livres. See Public Archives of Canada, *Correspondance officielle*, série 2, I, 37; *Archives des colonies*, Série C^{11A}, I, 180. A second fleet costing 103,976 livres was despatched the following year but did not reach Quebec. See *ibid.*, 181.

⁴⁶G. M. Asher, *A bibliographical and historical essay on the Dutch books and pamphlets relating to New Netherland* (Amsterdam, 1854-67), 32, 184. See also J. F. Jameson, "Willem Usselinx" (*Papers of the American Historical Association*, II, no. 3, 28).

⁴⁷*NYCD*, I, 66.

⁴⁸*Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 91, 236-7.

⁴⁹*Correspondance officielle*, série 2, I, 41-3; *Archives des colonies*, Série C^{11A}, I, 186.

60,000 livres as its share of the profit.⁵⁰ In 1638 another subsidiary company was organized from among the shareholders like the first, but when accounts were balanced after four years' operations, it was found that the losses sustained by this company were greater than the profits made by the first subsidiary company.⁵¹ The general company raised sufficient money for the embarkations of 1642 and 1643 from which it obtained a profit of 85,037 livres.⁵² By 1643, however, the company's total indebtedness had reached the alarming amount of 410,796 livres,⁵³ and its affairs were in such confusion that it reluctantly agreed in 1645 to lease the trade to a group of leading colonists in return for the annual payment of 1,000 livres' weight of beaver and the assumption of the administrative expenses of the colony.⁵⁴

The Dutch West India Company commenced operations with a capital of 7,108,106.50 guilders.⁵⁵ It spent huge sums on the equipment of privateering expeditions from which it occasionally secured immense returns.⁵⁶ The war was costly, however, and the provinces were tardy and irregular in making payments on the promised subsidies⁵⁷ so the company was forced practically into bankruptcy. In 1644 it required 1,000,000 guilders to meet immediate demands and for the future the Amsterdam chamber suggested union with the wealthy East India Company.⁵⁸ The upkeep of New Netherland accounted for only a small portion of the company's enormous debt. The official audit of 1644 revealed that the colony had produced only 50,000 to 70,000 guilders annually and had cost over 550,000 guilders, "deducting the returns received therefrom".⁵⁹

From the outset the West India Company intended to

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 182; Archives nationales, *Colonies F^{2A}*, carton 13, pièce 70, p. 2.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 17-20.

⁵³See the detailed statement in *Archives des colonies, Série C^{11A}*, I, 361-97.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 407-13; *Fonds français 10207*, "Articles accordéz entre les directeurs et associez en la compagnie de la Nouvelle-France, 1645"; *Edits, ordonnances royaux*, I, 28-9.

⁵⁵*Documents relating to New Netherland, 1624-1626*, xii.

⁵⁶In 1628 Piet Heyn captured the entire silver fleet returning from Cuba to Spain, the booty realizing at least 12,000,000 guilders for the company. See *NYCD*, I, 41; J. R. Brodhead, *History of the state of New York* (New York, 1853), I, 184; P. J. Blok, *History of the people of the Netherlands* (New York, 1907), IV, 36-7. In 1629 the company claimed to have taken over 200 merchantmen in addition to several galleons. By 1636 the number of its prizes had risen to 545 of which the cargoes brought in 90,000,000 guilders, making a handsome profit of 45,000,000 guilders. See *NYCD*, I, 42; P. Bonnassieux, *Les grandes compagnies de commerce* (Paris, 1892), 72.

⁵⁷Asher, *Dutch books and pamphlets*, 54 ff.

⁵⁸*NYCD*, I, 141-2.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 153. Dr. Jameson puts the cost at 515,000 guilders. See *Narratives of New Netherland*, 321, n. 1.

exclude colonists from participation in the fur trade but relaxed its regulations in 1629 to permit the patroons to trade at places where it had no agent.⁶⁰ The patroons were so energetic in taking advantage of this opportunity that they laid themselves open to the charge of trying to injure the company's business so in 1632 they were forbidden to deal in furs.⁶¹ This gave rise to a lengthy controversy which ended in the company's decision in 1639 to open trade to everyone in the colony.⁶² In New France beaver was early recognized as "the coin of greatest value" and Champlain, du Pont, Couillard, and the Jesuits had several hundred pelts in their possession at the time of their surrender to the Kirkes in 1629.⁶³ Apparently the Company of New France knew that it could not prevent colonists from using beaver for currency and from making some profit out of barter and it did not object as long as the skins finally came to its warehouse.⁶⁴

There were no important differences in the methods of trade employed in the two colonies. Both the French and Dutch urged the Indians to take their furs to the posts but both compromised to the extent of meeting them at some more convenient point for trade. The French, however, were aggressive in beating up trade. By the exchange of gifts, by sending youths to winter with distant tribes, by friendly contacts made by explorers, by establishing missions and schools, and by participating in native wars, the French tried to put the Indians under obligation to come down annually for barter. The Dutch distributed gifts, though not as lavishly or as systematically as the French. They entertained Indian trading parties in their homes⁶⁵ and some of them enjoyed the hospitality of Mohawk hosts but they did not make a practice of sending young men to live with the Indians. They were not interested in missionary activity and they were definitely instructed to keep out of native quarrels.⁶⁶ By catering to Indian taste in trading goods, however, they managed to stimulate trade without resort to other devices.

Beaver was the most acceptable peltry obtained in trade

⁶⁰*Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 145.

⁶¹*Laws and ordinances of New Netherland* ed. E. B. O'Callaghan (Albany, 1868), 13-4.

⁶²*Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 424-5.

⁶³*Oeuvres de Champlain* éd. C. H. Laverdière (Québec, 1870), VI, 15-6 (1427-8); "Documents relating to negotiations with England, 1629-1633" (*Report of the Public Archives of Canada for 1912*, appendix D, 22).

⁶⁴*Jesuit relations*, IX, 171-81; *Edits, ordonnances royales*, I, 8.

⁶⁵See, for example, *Narratives of New Netherland*, 175, 273.

⁶⁶*Documents relating to New Netherland, 1624-26*, 52-5, 109. There is no reason to believe that this policy was abandoned prior to 1645.

although otter also was welcomed by the Dutch. Ironware of all kinds pleased the Indians. The French found that kettles were much in demand, while the Dutch specialized in duffel cloth and wampum.⁶⁷ Both nations made moderate use of firearms and brandy in their early trade but interlopers in New France and private traders in New Netherland distributed them so freely that it became necessary to restrict and eventually to prohibit their use by irresponsible persons. The French forbade trade in guns and ammunition in 1612.⁶⁸ The Dutch procrastinated until 1639⁶⁹ when the mischief was already done. Difficulties in transportation precluded the use of intoxicating liquor in French trade with inland tribes but Indians at Tadoussac and in Acadia were able to indulge in drunkenness after the ships arrived each summer. Champlain tried to check the resulting disorders by a "stringent prohibition" issued in 1633⁷⁰ which his successor, Montmagny, reiterated in 1644.⁷¹ The Dutch allowed beer and brandy to be used recklessly in trade⁷² until Indian violence and war threatened the security of the colony. After a general uprising among tribes of the lower Hudson, the council of New Netherland forbade the sale of spirits and other intoxicating liquor to the Indians in 1643.⁷³ As in New France, however, the regulation was observed more in the breach than in the enforcement. Once the Indians had acquired a craving for brandy and firearms, they made incessant demands for these articles and with these demands Dutch private traders willingly complied.

As noted above, the years 1626-30 witnessed an important change in the trading situation in the Hudson valley when the Mohawk won the right of free access to Fort Orange and Rensselaerswyck. Coincident with this change occurred the lax administrations of the directors-general, Minuit⁷⁴ and van Twiller,⁷⁵ during which private individuals and clerks of the company

⁶⁷Van der Donck, "A description of the New Netherlands", 194-5; *Narratives of New Netherland*, 106, 130, 151, 173, 176, 217, 270, 301; *Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 427, 467, 471, 520, 545, 563, 633, 667, 670; *Documents relating to New Netherland, 1624-1626*, 223-31.

⁶⁸Archives départementales de la Seine Inférieure, *Registres du Parlement de Rouen*, 4 mars 1613.

⁶⁹*Laws and ordinances of New Netherland*, 18-9; *Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 426.

⁷⁰*Mercure françois*, XIX, 841; *Jesuit relations*, VI, 328-9, n. 19.

⁷¹*Ordonnances, commissions . . . des gouverneurs et intendants de la Nouvelle-France, 1639-1706* éd. P. G. Roy (Publications des Archives de la province de Québec, Beauceville, 1924), I, 5-6.

⁷²*Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 253, 267, 283, 683; *Narratives of New Netherland*, 216.

⁷³*Laws and ordinances of New Netherland*, 34.

⁷⁴1626-32. ⁷⁵1633-8.

smuggled and embezzled furs with impunity.⁷⁶ Competition became keener with the introduction of free trade in 1639 and excessive familiarity and "treating" became the order of the day. Guns were made available to the Iroquois in dangerous quantities although withheld as far as possible from tribes of the lower Hudson.⁷⁷ By 1642 the Mohawk were armed to the number of four hundred.⁷⁸

The French were excluded from the St. Lawrence between 1629 and 1632 when the English were in occupation of Quebec. Immediately after their return French agents began to appear among the Onondaga and Oneida⁷⁹ but evidently they did not make a determined bid for their trade. The upper Iroquois were jealous of the advantages which the Mohawk enjoyed in trade with the Dutch and could have been persuaded without much difficulty to go down the St. Lawrence for French goods. By 1633, however, Champlain had abandoned his policy of conciliation and was determined to subjugate the Iroquois in order to obtain peace on the St. Lawrence.⁸⁰

Meanwhile the Mohawk supply of beaver and wampum had become depleted so they hit upon the expedient of raiding the St. Lawrence and Ottawa valleys to despoil Huron flotillas of their cargoes of fur. To meet this situation, Montmagny began to arm Christian Algonkin and Montagnais in the late 1630's⁸¹ and the Hurons in 1640,⁸² but he did not proceed quickly enough to give them adequate protection against Iroquois ambushes. At the same time, he negotiated with the Iroquois for peace although refusing to accede to their demand for guns.⁸³ Since the Mohawk commanded the route to Huronia, they tried to dictate terms but Montmagny demurred. They therefore continued to harry the territories of French allies until 1645 when in desperation Montmagny persuaded all parties to conclude peace.⁸⁴ This lifted the blockade of the St. Lawrence but did not end the war in which the upper Iroquois were engaged against the Hurons.⁸⁵

The effect of Iroquois depredations on French trade is hard

⁷⁶Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS, 169-70.

⁷⁷NYCD, I, 150-1; *Narratives of New Netherland*, 273-84.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 274; *Jesuit relations*, XXII, 269; NYCD, I, 150.

⁷⁹*Narratives of New Netherland*, 139, 148, 150.

⁸⁰Champlain, *Works*, VI, 376, 378-9.

⁸¹*Jesuit relations*, XVIII, 157, 159, XXI, 67.

⁸²*Ibid.*, XX, 219-21.

⁸³*Ibid.*, XXI, 37, 53.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, XXVII, 247 ff., XXVIII, 291-303.

⁸⁵Yet Montmagny forbade trade in firearms with either Christian or non-Christian Indians in July, 1644, and thus crippled the Huron defence against raids by the Seneca. See *Ordonnances, commissions des gouverneurs*, I, 5-6.

to estimate. By 1626 the French had built up an inland trade of 12,000 to 15,000 skins a year.⁸⁶ By 1645 the receipt of 20,000 skins was considered to be a very satisfactory seasonal return.⁸⁷ From New Netherland the West India Company received over 7,000 beaver in 1626⁸⁸ and nearly 15,000 beaver in 1635.⁸⁹ In the latter year 8,000 skins was considered to be a good return from the company's trade in the upper Hudson valley.⁹⁰ By 1645 the total volume of Dutch trade probably approximated, if it did not exceed, that of the French. Neither the company nor the patroon did much business in the north after 1639⁹¹ but free traders carried away 3,000 to 4,000 furs from that region in 1643.⁹² Evidently the beaver trade diverted from the French was going to private individuals among the Dutch.

The real threat to French trade was presented by the Mohawk. If there had been any interruption of the Dutch supply of brandy which fired their ambition and of guns which enhanced their military prowess, the Iroquois might have been drawn into trade with the French. This contingency did not arise and so they continued their associations with the New Netherlanders. Montmagny at least seems to have been fully aware of the danger to French trade of Mohawk hostility, yet he prevented his own allies from attacking the Dutch⁹³ and thus from curtailing the supply of firearms which the Dutch made available to the Mohawk. Van Curler and Kieft, on the other hand, tried unsuccessfully to ransom the Jesuit, Jogues, who was held captive by the Iroquois. They finally managed to procure his escape and return to France but even if they had so desired they could not have demanded his release. By 1643 the New Netherlanders themselves were in the power of the Iroquois because they did not dare to incur their anger by provocative requests. The "heretic trade" in guns and brandy was continued in ensuing decades thus enabling the Iroquois to encompass the ruin and dispersal of many northern tribes and to threaten the very existence of the struggling colony on the St. Lawrence.

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⁸⁶ *Jesuit relations*, IV, 207.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, XXVII, 85.

⁸⁸ *NYCD*, I, 37; *Narratives of New Netherland*, 82, n. 2, 83.

⁸⁹ Brodhead, *History of the state of New York*, I, 268-9.

⁹⁰ *Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS*, 334.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 483, 546, 663.

⁹² "Arent van Curler and his historic letter to the patroon" ed. A. J. F. van Laer, *Yearbook of the Dutch Settlers Society of Albany*, III (1927-8), 29.

⁹³ *Jesuit relations*, XXV, 49.

